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From: Reeder, Joe (Shld-DC-LT)
Sent: Friday, September 26, 2008 3:03 PM
To: Samantha.Barrett@mail.house.gov
Cc: Einwechter, John (OfCnl-DC-GovAffairs)
Subject: Kurdistan Caucus and Conference Call with Congressman Steven King
Contacts: Congresswoman Nancy Boyda
Attachments: KAC Bylaws20080709.pdf; 371686169_v_1_Kurdish American Caucus Objections Responses (4).DOC; 371686153_v_1_Kurdish Caucus Talking Points (4).DOC; 371686152_v_1_KURDISH AMERICAN CAUCUS (4).DOC

Dear Samantha,

Thank you for returning my call to Congressman King. As you and I discussed, General Jay Garner and I would appreciate the opportunity to talk with him briefly by telephone about the new Kurdish American Caucus, which was founded a few months ago and already has a strong bipartisan membership of 18.

I have attached a copy of the Caucus by-laws, as well as a current list of Caucus members and two point papers that further explain the purpose and goals of the Caucus. Fundamentally, the Caucus seeks to promote understanding and awareness of Kurdish history, culture and current affairs, so that Members of Congress will be better equipped to analyze issues of US policy that relate to and affect Kurdish interests in the United States, Iraq, Turkey and other countries where significant Kurdish populations reside. After you have reviewed these materials, we would be very pleased to answer any questions you may have.

As one of the relatively few Members of Congress who has actually visited the KRG, Congressman King has seen first-hand the economic and cultural vitality of the Kurdish people and their unwavering commitment to democracy, peace and human rights. The Caucus is intended to promote understanding and awareness of these remarkable friends of the U.S. and to encourage emulation of their shining example.

As I mentioned during the call, General Garner is here today, but we will make any window that you can give us, work. I think we only need 5-10 minutes. In the meantime, if you have any questions or concerns, please call me or Col (ret) Jack Einwechter at 202-331 3100.

Regards,

Joe Reeder

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9/26/2008

Answering Possible Objections to the Kurdish American Caucus

1. Objection: The Kurdish American Caucus (KAC) suggests Congressional support for Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) independence from Iraq at a time when the U.S. is trying to promote national unity and reduce tensions among Iraqi ethnic and sectarian groups.

Response: First, this is **not** an Iraqi Kurdish or KRG caucus. It is a **Kurdish American** caucus that seeks to promote understanding of Kurdish culture, history and issues important to the Kurdish community in the U.S. and elsewhere. Second, the caucus emphasizes the Kurdish commitment to a unified, Federal and democratic Iraq and the full participation of Kurds in the Iraqi government as stipulated in the Iraqi constitution. Third, the KRG is officially committed to a unified, Federal and democratic Iraq and has no ambition to become a separate state.

2. Objection: The caucus suggests Congressional support for an independent Kurdistan, which would incite tensions with our NATO ally, Turkey, as well as Syria and Iran, just as the U.S. is seeking to advance better relations between Turkey and the KRG.

Response: The caucus in absolutely no way advocates a greater Kurdistan. Indeed, the caucus by-laws do not endorse separatism at all. On the contrary, the by-laws call for respect for human rights for Kurdish minorities within recognized nations in which they live and explicitly express the Kurdish commitment to a unified, Federal Iraq. In fact, the caucus can be a vehicle for promoting the integration of Kurdish minorities where they live and encouraging this minority group to embrace the commitment to national unity as the KRG has done in Iraq.

3. Objection: The Kurdish caucus is unprecedented because it is based on ethnic identity rather than national identity.

Response: The House of Representative already has a Hellenic Caucus and an Asian Pacific American Caucus, which have ethnic and transnational purposes. The Kurdish American Caucus will pay special recognition to American Kurds in the U.S., their contributions both to this country and in Iraq, their friendship with the U.S. and the necessity to promote their rights as an ethnic minority in America.

4. Objection: The Kurdish caucus would, in effect, give unprecedented recognition and status to a regional sub-national government. This is a bad precedent that could embroil the U.S. Congress internal disputes between governments and groups.

Response: This is not a KRG caucus. It is an American caucus with a goal of assisting Kurds in the U.S. and in the Diaspora, not the policies of any government.

5. Objection: The Kurdish caucus is not justified based on the relatively small number of ethnic Kurds in the United States.

Response: The Kurdish population in America has not been fully documented. The estimated 50,000 Kurds who have made the U.S. their home deserve to be heard and given the respect they deserve. They are also representative of a people that numbers 30 million worldwide, which have suffered simply because of the language they speak and the culture they hold dear. This caucus will provide them a voice in the U.S. and will allow them the chance to live the American dream.

Role of the Kurdish American Caucus

The Kurdish American Caucus promotes knowledge and understanding of the Kurdish people throughout the world. U.S. policy toward the Kurds is key to American relations with allies in Turkey and Iraq as well as our relations with Iran and Syria. The Kurdistan Region of Iraq is vital to an American vision of a peaceful and prosperous Iraq. The Caucus focuses on Kurdish populations worldwide, especially in the U.S., with major emphasis on the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, which is playing a pivotal role in the future of Iraq.

Members of Congress are joining the Kurdish American Caucus for several reasons:

1. Kurdistan is a beacon of stability, security and prosperity in Iraq and the entire Middle East. We must ensure that U.S. policy reinforces the hard-earned success of Iraq's Kurds.

- The Kurdistan Region is a model for all of Iraq.
- Since Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) began, not one U.S. soldier or civilian contractor has been killed, wounded or kidnapped in the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).
- Kurdish Muslims are both moderate and tolerant, and they strongly oppose extremism.
- The Kurdistan Region is a model of reconstruction success - over 65% of the villages razed by Saddam have been rebuilt; a new liberal foreign investment law passed in 2006 encourages foreign land ownership, tax incentives and easy repatriation of profits; there are five vibrant universities operating in the region today, including the American University of Iraq, based in Suleimaniyah.
- The KRG is a functioning democracy committed to establishing a federal, unified democratic system throughout Iraq.
- The KRG has fostered a climate of moderation with strong emphasis on minority rights. In Iraqi Kurdistan, Kurds, Assyrians, Turkmen, Yazidis, Muslim and Christian are living side-by-side in harmony and tolerance.

2. The KRG is a vital ally, and strongly protects U.S. interests throughout Iraq and the region.

- The KRG has and will continue to play, a constructive role in reducing tensions with Turkey. Iraqi Kurdistan is a buffer against international conflict.
- There are 30 million Kurds in the region (5 million in Iraq), which is the largest ethnic group in the world without a state. The U.S. must support Iraqi Kurdistan's role as a force for peace.

- A moderate, democratic and stable pro-American ally on the border between Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and Syria offers both diplomatic opportunities and deterrent effects to regional conflict.
- The rich natural resources of the Kurdistan Region make this an attractive emerging market for American business.
- Kurdish Forces are a cohesive, effective and respected combat force, and have proven to be America's most valuable indigenous ally throughout OIF.

3. The people of Iraqi Kurdistan love the United States. They embrace America as liberators and are committed to a strong alliance with the U.S.

- Over 55,000 Kurds live in the U.S. today.
- In a Middle East region torn by conflict and rampant anti-American sentiment, Iraqi Kurdistan is a haven of strong friendship for the U.S.
- Kurds are open to U.S. investment, ideas, security cooperation and diplomatic partnership.
- America deserves to be known as a steadfast, dependable friend to loyal allies.
- The Congressional Kurdish American Caucus is strengthening solidarity and influence for this vital friend and ally.

KURDISH AMERICAN CAUCUS

The Kurdish American Caucus (KAC) was officially founded in mid-2008, by co-Chairmen Rep. Lincoln Davis & Rep. Joe Wilson.

As of 22 September 2008, KAC includes 11 Democrats and 7 Republicans, as follows:

Congressman Marsha Blackburn (R-TN)
Congressman Jim Cooper (D-TN)
Congressman Lincoln Davis (D-TN, Co-Chair)
Congressman Bob Filner (D-CA)
Congressman Wayne Gilchrest (R-MD)
Congressman Sam Graves (R-MO)
Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY)
Congressman Peter Hoekstra (R-MI)
Congressman Steve Israel (D-NY)
Congressman Greg Meeks (D-NY)
Congressman Jim Moran (D-Va)
Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ)
Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez (D-CA)
Congressman Joe Sestak (D-PA)
Congressman Chris Shays (R-CN)
Congressman Tom Tancredo (R-CO)
Congressman Chris Van Hollen (D-MD)
Congressman Walberg (R-MI)
Congressman Joe Wilson (R-SC, Co-Chair)

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KURDISH AMERICAN CAUCUS
BY-LAWS

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I. Name

Kurdish American Caucus (KAC)

II. Preamble

Whereas Kurds are the world's largest ethnic group without a nation of their own;

Whereas Kurds in the U.S. seek to strengthen relations between the Kurdish communities and the American people;

Whereas the Kurds have been faithful and valuable allies of U.S. civil and military efforts to establish a unified, democratic and federal Iraq;

Whereas for decades Kurdish populations in the Middle East have been the object of persecution, genocide and systematic deprivation of human rights;

Whereas it is the goal of the Kurdish people to promote respect for human rights everywhere through democratic and peaceful means;

Whereas Kurds share the same values of democracy and respect for human rights as Americans do, including the right to life, liberty, and the security of one's person;

Whereas American and Kurdish interests and values are identical in key areas, including in countering terrorism, Islamic extremism, the development of civil society, democratic institutions and sustainable economies in the Middle East and elsewhere;

Whereas peace in the Middle East will only be possible once the entire region's religious and ethnic groups, including Kurds, can enjoy basic human rights; the rule of law based on accepted international norms; the freedom to practice cultural beliefs and customs, including the right to educate their children in their mother tongue;

Now therefore, the Kurdish American Caucus is hereby established for the following purposes and according to the following by-laws:

III. Statement of Purpose

The Congressional Kurdish American Caucus shall be a bi-partisan organization of Members of the United States Congress. Its goal shall be to be to promote understanding of Kurdish interests, provide accurate and timely information about issues affecting the Kurdish people, and recommend initiatives, which will:

- (1) Promote American-Kurdish friendship and cooperation on issues of mutual interest in the Executive Branch, the U.S. Congress, and the general public;
- (2) Advocate the interests of the more than fifty thousand American Kurds in the U.S.;
- (3) Promote and strengthen people-to-people relations between Americans and Kurdish communities worldwide.

IV. Election and Duties of the Co-Chairs

The Caucus shall have two Co-Chairs, one Republican and one Democrat. The Co-Chairs shall have the authority to call meetings, schedule speakers and provide general organizational support for the Caucus. However, the Co-Chairs are expected to consult regularly with the Caucus and keep the Members of the Caucus informed of their activities. Election of the Co-Chairs shall be by motion by an existing Member of the Caucus at a *meeting* held at the end of a Congress. Election shall be by a simple majority of those Caucus Members present and voting.

V. Election and Duties of the Executive Committee

The Caucus shall have an Executive Committee of ten Members, five Republicans and five Democrats. Members of the Executive Committee shall be nominated by a Member of the Caucus and shall be elected by a simple majority of the Caucus Members present. The Executive Committee will develop the strategic plan and objectives for the caucus; identify and review issues for caucus consideration; and, establish Task Forces as necessary.

VI. Appointment of Members to Head Task Forces

The Caucus Co-Chairs shall appoint Members of the Caucus to serve as head of various Task Forces. These Task Forces will allow more Caucus Members to assume visible leadership roles in the Caucus.